FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE

TOPKNOT

HE was an old Bluejay, who had lived in this particular neck-of-the woods for many, many years. He had to sit right still, shut his eyes tight, and think and think before ever he could recall the time when he was a small, naked youngster, sprawling around in a nest way up among the leaves in a big red-oak.

He remembered, in a dim, far-away fashion, how his mother used to look, in fact when he shut his eyes very tight he could see that blue dress, with black and white trimmings, that

A big boy in his first long tail feathers.

she always wore.

And he remembered her bill, how black and strong and capable it was. Though she often scolded him, she never got tired and fretful, like some mothers do.

He recalled, with a little feeling of shame, how he used to follow her about, begging to be fed, when he had grown as large, or larger, than she was. He remembered, too, how great big, hulking fellow as he was, he used to shake his wings and squeak in high-pitched, baby tones, whenever his mother was around. He hadn't forgotten how proud he was when he first learned to crack his own acorns by holding them firmly against the limb with his claws and pecking and pecking until the shell came off and left the yellow meat, for all the world like a little round ball of butter. But these things all happened so long ago that it really seemed as if it was in another world somewhere. He could count on his toes fifteen winters, with their snow storms and sleet, and fifteen happy summers, with their nest building and babies, that had come and gone since he was a big boy in his first long tail feathers.

But winter was the time of all the year that he dreaded most. Winter—with its dearth of fat, yellow-legged grasshoppers, soft, gray, cut worms and delicious silver-winged moths. These had all gone with the vanished summer. And how he did miss those quiet little picnics in the woods, when he came upon a nest of some small bird, with five or six dainty little eggs, all fresh and sweet—and, the parent birds away from home.

He did get so awfully tired of frozen acorns for breakfast, dinner and supper! And these rainy days—cold, rainy days! Just drip, drip, drip, from morning until night; not a dry spot anywhere and no sunshine to sit in! Sometimes the rain would turn into ice, and that made matters all the worse. Think of sitting on ice-covered limbs, and holding an ice-coated acorn in one's bare toes, and pecking and pecking, only to find a sodden and rotted kernel within! Yes, Topknot found winter days had enough, but winter nights were simply awful! The ivy vine, where he slept, was often covered with a coating of the coldest ice one ever sat on; and then, the frozen twigs were so brittle that they were apt to snap and give one a fall, just as one was dropping to sleep. How the wind did blow, and how the stiff, icy leaves did rattle and crack!

Even when poor Topknot got in the thickest bunch of leaves he could find and, with head tucked far back under his wings, he couldn't sleep, for the cold wind crept under his feathers and seemed to whistle through his marrowless bones.

But there was one blessed thing he had always noticed: This awful weather was always followed by a time when the sun shone warm and bright, and when the buds swelled and swelled until they burst into clusters of beautiful, fresh, green baby leaves! Hoppers and crickets once more courted and sang in the tall, rank grass,

And these rainy days!

lovely fat worms crawled lazily everywhere, and life was just one long, bluejay luncheon time!

On sunny days Topknot would sit by the hour on the edge of the horse trough and preen his beautiful feathers as he admired his reflection in the water. His rasping voice lost much of its harshness, and soft love notes dripped, honey-like, from his bill, and his heart went pitty-pat whenever he caught a glimpse of a sky blue skirt flitting through the leaves. Sidling, like an awkward boy, up to the lady of his choice, and, in his blunt, bluejay way, Topknot tells the old, old story over again. This ardent courtship usually ends in a brief bridal trip down to the clover field, where grasshoppers were to be had for the picking.

Housekeeping followed hard on the heels of the honeymoon and, in a few weeks, five ugly bluejay babies were clamoring to be fed in the ramshackle nest up in the red oak. For the next month Topknot had little time for teasing the cat, asleep under the hedge, for Mrs. Bluejay saw to it that he did his full share towards feeding the babies. Topknot loved these hungry youngsters in a bookish and perfunctory way, but he wasn't a bit sorry when they left the nest and flew away to hustle for themselves.

It gave him more time to just hang around and to act as a kind of a self-appointed constable, or rural policeman of the birds.

If a strange bird appeared Topknot would raise his crest until it looked very much like a helmet and, puffing out his chest and throwing back his blue-clad shoulders, he immediately proceeded to interview that bird and find out who he was, where he came from and how long he expected to stay.

If a hawk happened to pass by, Topknot would drop anything he might be doing and, with loud, discordant cries, pursue that raider of the air until he was glad to take refuge in the first thorn thicket he came to. Even a buzzard, soaring and wheeling in circles that would make a Wright green with envy could not hope to escape the frantic attacks of this policeman who served without pay. To tell the truth, Topknot had many traits, that do not exactly call for emulation. In fact, he does some things that the best society does not approve of. In a way, he is dishonest. He can't, for the life of him, resist the temptation to steal a choice morsel from a smaller or weaker neighbor. And, in some bird circles, it has been whispered, that he has been known to make a quick lunch of a whole nest full of young wrens or catbirds, while the parent birds were away. Topknot doesn't take the time or trouble to deny these rumors, but goes right on planting acorns and burying nuts, when he can find nothing more exciting to do, so that many a waste place is clothed in trees or shrubs—thanks to his propensity for hiding things. He loves, above all things, to find a crack in a wall, or a rotted out hole in a tree, and then try to fill it with acorns, by dropping in, one at a time.

He is one of the first birds up in the morning, and one of the very last to go to bed. The days are all too short for him. He has so many "irons in the fire" that night always catches him with tasks unfinished. When he has nothing else to do, he sits down and tries to invent some new sound that is more ear-splitting, more nerve racking than the last. As long as he remains silent, he is really a very attractive fellow—but, the moment he opens his mouth, the illusion vanishes and, we know him for what he is—a skyblue bundle of discord! Poor old Topknot! He hasn't many friends—and few have a good word to say for him, but we know of no one who gets more out of life than he!

One Way Up

WHEN a great merchant of Liverpool was asked by what means he had amassed a fortune, he graciously replied:

"By one article alone, in which thou mayest deal, too, if thou pleasest—it is civility."

When some generous kindness has not received true appreciation but has been met with incivility, we may forget Sterne's statement:

"Ye small sweet courtesies of life: for smooth do ye make the road of

The boy was unfailingly polite, courteous and civil.

from old age and other causes, he shouldered the responsibility of the little household.

"Thank you, sir," and "Thank you, sir," again was the manner in which he expressed gratitude to the wharf men who helped him because his father had been a sailor and a fisherman. The boy was unfailingly polite, courteous and civil. The men of the docks and of the trawlers became interested in him because he appreciated their kindness and frankly told them how well he valued their help.

Courtesy gave this boy the capital for a little retail fish-shop. Courtesy gave him the chance to go up as a wholesaler. Later, courtesy made him bank president, and manager of a big seafood company.

"By one article alone, civility," this boy had risen from obscurity to importance. What he did, others can do. Courtesy is free. The great wise man of Concord, Ralph Waldo Emerson, hit the nail squarely on the head when he declared what everybody knows to be true:

"Life is not so short but that there is always time for courtesy."

Out in the Orchard

THE Trees shivered, but not from cold. They felt new life awaken in their hearts, and they were glad to respond to Mother Nature's call. She said: "Wake up! Wake up, my pets, the warm weather is here! Do you hear me calling to you? Stretch out your limbs and wake up!"

The Silver Ash was the first to answer. "Oh, what a lovely sleep we had! I feel like putting on my shimmery gray gown and gladden the hearts of men." "What will you do?" asked Mother Nature, turning to the Apple Tree.

"I will robe myself in my pink, and I will throw a perfume around me so as to lure the souls of children."

Then spoke the Maple—"I know that children love to stand beneath my shade and cool themselves with the breezes that blow through my leaves. Do you not like my green dress? The children do, and I love to hear their prattle as they trot to and from school."

"Even I am happy," said the Weeping Willow, as her leaves swayed in the breeze.

Then the Cherry Tree chuckled, and looking up to heaven he said, "Thank my lucky stars that I am not a Weeping Willow, for I love to laugh. My, how I laughed last year when my fruit was ripe. The little girls picked my cherries and dangled them from their ears in sport."

"Dear Mother Nature is good to all of us," chimed in the Pear Tree. "She gives us blossoms to gladden the eyes of man, and her fruits are luscious to suit the tastes of all. Spring is a gentle nurse, who watches over us and sends soft breezes and warm sun's rays to make us live."

"Then let us give three cheers for Summer," they cried.

"And one loud hurrah for Nature, the mother of all."

AESOP'S RETOLD

By GARRETT NEWKIRK

THE MISER.

A MAN his land and houses sold
Till he had nothing left but gold.

Beneath an old deserted wall,
Within a box he hid it all;
And there by early morning light,
Or when the moon above was bright,
He went to view the shining store,
And count his shekels o'er and o'er.

A laborer with watchful eye,
Observed each daily visit sly;
And, learning where the gold was kept,
Removed it while the owner slept.
The miser now was in despair;
He wept aloud and tore his hair;
Until a neighbor coming near,
Gave this encouragement and cheer.

Said he, "My friend, cry not nor moan,
But find of equal weight a stone,
And bury that; 'twill nothing cost,
In place of gold that you have lost.
Imagine it to be the same—
For so it is, except in name.
Not using what you had, one jot;
'Twas just as if you had it not."

'Tis not in having, but the use,
That gives to ownership excuse.

The Moon Man's Story

"WOO-O-WOO-O-O," whistled the March wind as it switched around the bow-windowed sitting room. "A real March night," said Uncle Joe, addressing no one in particular, "just the kind to make one want to hug the log-fire."

"I think it is just the kind of night for Uncle Joe to tell us a story—will you?" asked Jerry, snuggling up to his uncle.

"Yes, please do," cried the two nieces and other nephew in chorus, drawing their chairs around Uncle Joe's.

"Very well," he said, sitting himself in the big arm chair, "I will tell you the story as the Moon-man told it to me."

"The Moon-man!" said Jerry, "there ain't no such thing." (Oh Jerry, what of your grammar!)

"Indeed there is, and here's the story as he told it to me: 'Up here, where the stars shine brightly, is a land where good people dwell. This land is rich with the best of foods; and sparkling waters flow, but long ago there was a great drought. Not a drop of water could be found any where, and the good people were dying of thirst.

In one of the houses dwelt a little girl and her mother. The mother was moaning 'oh, for a drink of water! I'm thirsting!'

The child went up into the mountains to pray to God for water. She felt her prayer would be answered, so she took a little tin dipper with her. 'Water,' she prayed, 'we need water!' When she arose from her knees she looked in the dipper and found it filled with cold sparkling water.

'Mother will live,' she cried as she hastened down the mountains, forgetting in her excitement to quench her own thirst. She did not heed the jagged stones as they cut her little bare feet, she thought only of her mother. As she ran she heard a whine, and there stood a dog, his parched tongue hanging out of his mouth.

'Here, doggie, drink,' she said, holding the tin dipper to his mouth.

He snatched the dipper and threw it against the sky.

The dog lapped the water, but when he had finished, the dipper filled itself again, and as it did so, it changed from tin to silver. When the girl reached home she met a servant at the door.

'I'm dying of thirst,' cried the servant, and the child raised the dipper and bade the girl to drink. She drained it dry, when lo! the dipper changed to gold and filled itself again.

'Mother,' cried the child, 'I'm coming! Here drink,' and as the mother wet her parched lips and drained the water, the dipper once more filled itself and changed from gold to diamonds. An old traveler came up the path crying 'Water, for God's sake!' The child ran to him with the dipper, and as he drank, he snatched the dipper and threw it against the sky. The end of the drought had come. The dipper remained there as a memento to the child who forgot herself in doing good to others!'" Uncle Joe ceased talking.

"Oh, I know what you mean, it's the dipper made of stars up there," said Jerry pointing to the sky.

"Yes, that is the story of the dipper, just as the Moon-man told it to me."

"Woo-o-Woo-o-o," whistled the March wind as it swept around the house—and the Moon-man winked his eye at us, and then disappeared behind a cloud.

Three Strange Tales

CHARLOTTE and Frank were sitting before the big open fireplace. It was too early for dinner and not late enough for "lessons." It was just that time of an afternoon when it is oh, so hard to "find something to do."

They had about made up their minds to be content with watching the logs crackle and sputter and the sparks dance up the chimney when Uncle Will entered the room.

"Well, well," he said, "you certainly look cheerful. Now I shall draw up my chair right beside you and we'll watch the fire."

"Tell us a story, Uncle Will?" said Charlotte presently.

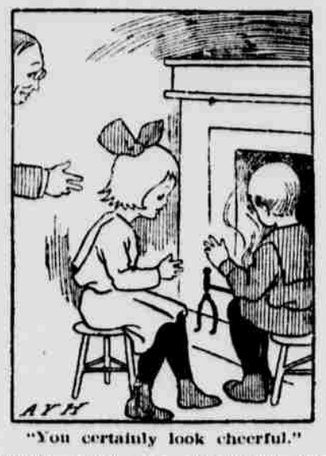
"Oh, do!" exclaimed Frank. "Something real exciting and—"

"A fairy story!" suggested Charlotte.

Uncle Will smiled and pushed his chair a bit farther back from the fire, for it was hot. "No," he replied. "I think I'll not tell you a story, but I will tell you a few facts I learned today while reading—and perhaps you may think them quite wonderful. I know I was surprised."

The children settled back, content, to listen.

"Flowers are to see and smell, aren't they?" Uncle Will continued, an amused twinkle in his eye. "Well, some flowers are also good to eat. Oh, yes, quite appetizing! For instance, in certain parts of Eastern Europe, the people make a mixture of roses,



"You certainly look cheerful."

violets, limes and sweetmeats and then eat it over fruit of various sorts; and in Turkey they flavor candy with crushed lilies, carnations and with lavender.

"But how would you like to eat a floral sandwich? In Greece, or in Turkey, a friend might say to you, 'Won't you have another nasturtium sandwich.' There they also make sandwiches of finely ground peppermint which is spread over radishes, thinly sliced, and the whole then placed between two pieces of very thinly sliced and buttered bread. Dahlias, too, are eaten. And in Japan and China flowers are as much a part of the menu as are vegetables in our own land."

Uncle Will pushed his chair still farther back.

"Do you know," he went on, "that there are flowers under the sea? That is, they aren't exactly flowers, for they are not plants; but many of them look so much like blossoms that often it is not easy to believe that they are really myriads of tiny animals. Corals, for instance, in tropical waters, are brilliantly colored, with branches and graceful forms that look for all the world like flowers. But coral, you remember, is formed of the skeletons of many tiny, tiny animals. The sea anemone and the sea cucumber, both of them sea animals, also bloom almost as though they were plants.

"And now—for my third strange fact—what would you think if I told you there are such things as jugs that whistle—yes, whistle quite distinctly and sweetly? Well, they use to make them in ancient Peru; and several are now on exhibition at the British Museum. To give a jug of this sort its right name, you should call it a silvador, or silvio. "One of them, found in an old Peruvian burying ground, was formed of two vases, each joined to the other but with an opening, or hole, between them. Then the neck of one of these vases was closed except for a clay pipe which was inserted and which led to the real body of the whistle; the neck of the other vase was left open.

"When water, or some other liquid, was poured into the opening the air in the other vase became compressed and in escaping through the narrow opening was forced into the whistle, the vibrations, of course, making the sounds.

"Let me add a few more strange facts I came across while reading today. They concern sleep. The elephant, for example, sleeps standing up; birds, or nearly all of them, turn their heads around backward, facing their tails, and with their beaks thrust down in their feathers. When a fox or a wolf goes to sleep, he curls up with his nose quite close to the soles of his feet, and then he covers both nose and feet with his thick, warm, bushy tail.

"And Mr. Bat never enjoys his nap unless he is hanging by his hind claws head downward. So—mercy me, can that be dinner already! Well, well, I do hope you children will read things of this sort for yourselves—you will find them quite as interesting as your story books."

AN EASILY MADE MASK.

EVERY boy and girl loves to put on a mask or false face, and puzzle his or her friends. The shops are full of comic masks, but the most fun can be gotten from the easily made paper ones. This is the way to make it:

Take a sheet of heavy yellow wrapping paper, about a foot and a half square. Fold it double like the figure 1, then cut out the eyes and nose and mouth, and round the ear. For the beard fold the bottom portion several times and cut it in long slits. Open out and you will have the completed mask. You can use your water-paints and make the false face as grotesque as possible.

The long straight tabs are pinned around your head, and the mask is adjusted over the face. Roll your eyes and stick your tongue through the opening over the mouth, and you will be sufficient to scare the bravest of your little friends. Try it.

OUR PUZZLE CORNER

DELETED RIVERS.

Delete a letter from a river in Europe—transpose—and find the vapor of water.

Delete a letter from a river in Europe—transpose—and find a vehicle.

Delete a letter from a river in Europe—transpose—and find a sudden blast of wind.

Delete a letter from a river in Europe—transpose—and find a guiding line.

MENAGERIE OF SYNONYMS.

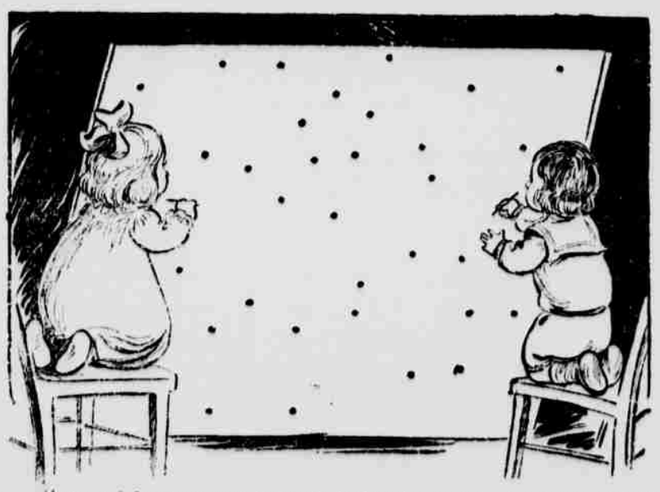
1—An object of public interest; 2—301 pounds of lead; 3—To mimic; 4—A party of men assembled for amusement; 5—Idleness; 6—To follow stealthily; 7—To endure; 8—To dishearten; 9—A cunning fellow.

ANSWERS.

DELETED RIVERS: (*Thames—Steam*), (*Neva—Van*), (*Tagus—Gust*), (*Rhine—Rein*).

MENAGERIE OF SYNONYMS: 1, *Lion;* 2, *Pig;* 3, *Ape;* 4, *Stag;* 5, *Sloth;* 6, *Dog;* 7, *Bear;* 8, *Cow;* 9, *Fox.*

THE DRAWING LESSON.



Mary and John are practicing their drawing lesson. By connecting the dots properly with straight lines they can make six separate figures. A square, a star, a diamond, a triangle, a square block and a pyramid. See if you can make the figures by connecting the dots with a pencil.

Good Night and Good Morning

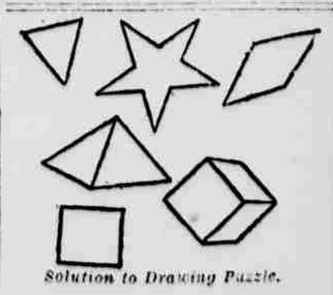
WHEN Mother says "Children, good-night and sleep tight,
Now turn 'round and curl up in bed,"
The children in China are greeting the light
And saying good-morning instead.

And when they are trotting about in the grass
And playing their games in the sand,
We're sleeping our little tired heads off—alas
And dreaming in beddy-by-land.

But we pay them back in the morning at eight,
When sunshine has painted our skies—
For you, little Chinaboy, then it is late
And time you were closing your eyes.

It's all very mixed. I'm beginning to think,
And the sun is the cause of the trouble;
I wish it were day time for us and the Chink—
But the sun cannot make himself double.

"Good-night little Chinkie," we laughingly say
As our school bell rings out on the air,
"Good-night little neighbor and also good-day,"
Says the Chink as he plaits up his hair!



Solution to Drawing Puzzle.